

Glenda Wiles

From: Whispering Turbines, Inc. [wti@whisperingturbines.com]
Sent: Friday, May 16, 2008 4:58 PM
To: Glenda Wiles
Subject: Zoning

To the Ravalli County Commissioners:

This letter is to voice our negative opinion about zoning Ravalli County. First off, we would like to say that we understand that you as commissioners have gone to a lot of work trying to prepare a plan that will work for all of Ravalli County. In my opinion, that is an impossible task!

Listed below are some of the problems that we have with Draft B of Clarion's Zoning.

1. To limit "Cottage Industry" type home businesses. We feel that Draft B is too limiting to our business and other "Home Based" businesses in Ravalli County. Please do not approve the limits of home businesses. Many of us run our successful companies out of our homes, and Draft B could limit all home based businesses to have a) only one employee (who does not live at the premises) b) not being able to expand our businesses. If we want or need to expand our businesses, we should be allowed to c) If a catastrophe happens to our existing place of business we would not be able to rebuild and continue providing an income for our families. Your zoning parameters in Draft B also disallows the transfer of the business to anyone else, including family members. Our son has worked for us for the last 12 years, and we are planning to pass this business on to him at a future date. This would include the house and business. As far as we understand, this would not be allowed. This is part of our long range business plan, and zoning would cost our family and company many thousands of dollars. So in short, the County Commissioners, Planning Board and Clarion need to understand that if the roles were reversed and a group of people were trying to put restrictions on your form of employment and business you would fight to save your livelihood, and that is exactly what we are doing.

We brought this concern up at the first CPC meeting and we were told by Carlotta and John from the Planning department that this would be taken out of Draft B. So after that meeting, we waited for Draft B to arrive with all the changes we were told by the Commissioners and the Planning Dept. that would be there. If anything, the changes in Draft B are more restrictive to home businesses! At the meeting at Charlos Heights Fire House Carlotta told us that Draft C would be less restrictive, and to have faith that it would be better for home business. Why should we believe this when nothing changed last time?

2. Non Conforming Entity: First off this label is negative. In our business (Whispering Turbines, Inc.) we have been working from our home in this valley for nearly 20 years. We have never in that amount of time had any complaint or even a concern from anyone! Our business is clean, quiet, with few employees. This business brings a decent amount of revenue to this valley. Being labeled as non conforming does not set well with us. We are hard working, good citizens that pay our taxes both at the county, state and federal levels. Our business is well respected, with many accolades and awards from our community and beyond. We have also worked with the valley schools, doing projects and programs to help with the student's educations, and have also trained students from Montana Tech and a few of the local high schools. Besides, the fact that in the summer months, Whispering Turbines, Inc. keeps many of the helicopters fighting fires in our valley running and safe. Our point for bringing up this is to tell you that we have done many things to make our business profitable and a company to be proud of. We do not like the negative impact of being labeled "non conforming". Our business conforms to everything the county, state and even the FAA asks of us. Can't you come up with a better label? Can you name "non conforming" businesses like ours something like "Home based Businesses" or "Combined Home and Business"? Just a suggestion.
3. What would be wrong with the Darby area doing Voluntary Zoning? If the general public in that are does not want to be zoned, couldn't you loosen the rules for Voluntary zoning and let each landowner decide what happens to their own property?

I feel that most of us live in the Bitterroot Valley for obvious reasons, and one of them is because of the freedom

we have living here. Please keep this in mind while you go through the drafts from Clarion. We choose to believe that you as commissioners have our (the citizens of Ravalli County) interests at heart. Please remember that when you make your choices where zoning is concerned. We want to say that during the 1 for 2 debate, we feel that there was some manipulation by the County Commissioners and Planning Board, The County Attorney and possibly Stuart Brandbourg and "Friends of the Bitterroot" to try and confuse the general public on what they are voting for. The straw pole that we are doing in Darby could have been a simple Yes or No for zoning, but the wording is far more confusing than needed. This again raises a big question as to what the hidden agenda is with our elected officials. Why should we believe that our futures are safe with you? Please give us reason to trust you. PLEASE! We also feel that there is pressure on the Commissioners to do what groups like the "Friends of the Bitterroot" demand, because of the constant threat of being sued. This is not right! How many jobs has Stuart Brandbourg and his associates cost this valley? Now we feel that he is threatening our livelihood and happiness here. His groups have the time and money to slam a lawsuit on whatever they oppose. The rest of us hardworking citizens (who are not living off the government) have to work to keep up the style of life we prefer, we don't have the time to sit in meetings and threaten to sue when a decision does not go our way. Please, do not bend to those threats!

IN closing, a great quote comes to mind- "I fear all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant!" Isaroku Yamamoto, Admiral of the Japanese Navy, Pearl Harbor 1942 This is what we feel the County Commissioners have done moving so fast through this process.

Thank you,

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